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CONTACT: STEVE COLE

PHONE: (813) 274-6136

FAX: (813) 274-6300

**ALBERT ZIMMERMAN SENTENCED TO MORE THAN 24 YEARS
FOR PRODUCTION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

Tampa, FL - U.S. District Judge Susan C. Bucklew today sentenced Albert Andre Zimmerman (age 41), the former spokesman for the Florida Department of Children and Families, to 24 years and four months in federal prison on a charge of production of child pornography. Zimmerman, formerly of Tallahassee and Lakeland, had pleaded guilty on January 21, 2008.

Zimmerman was arrested on a federal complaint on February 11, 2008, and was indicted on April 16, 2008.

According to Zimmerman's plea agreement, from October 2004 until December 2007, in Hillsborough and Orange Counties, Zimmerman became friendly with six minor males, one under the care of the Florida Department of Children and Families. Zimmerman persuaded these minors to engage in sexually explicit conduct and then send him pictures of the conduct via email. At times, Zimmerman instructed the minors concerning the poses they should assume for the photos. Zimmerman told the minors that he would pay them money for the pictures, and he did indeed pay some of the minors. Zimmerman also told some of the minors that he was selling the pornographic photographs to another individual, who would in turn sell them overseas.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Jacksonville Division, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Florida Attorney General Bill McCollum's CyberCrime Unit, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and the Tampa Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Colleen Murphy-Davis prosecuted the case.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, and to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.